

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 SAJ-01 DRC-01 SSO-00

/100 W

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P R 171240Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4606

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

COMIDEASTFOR

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0480

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOM MP

SUBJECT: ALLEGED SOVIET BASE IN MAURITIUS

1. WE HAVE BEEN REGULARLY REPORTING ON SOVIET FISHERIES NEGOTIATIONS, ONLY KNOWN TALKS IN PROGRESS RELATIVE TO SOVIET/MAURITIAN RELATIONS. AS RECENTLY AS JUNE 14 (PORT LOUIS 0476, BEING REPEATED) PERMANENT SECRETARY IN PM'S OFFICE INFORMED ME OF CAUTION BEING EXERCISED BY GOM IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH SOVIETS. IT WAS WITH SOME SURPRISE THAT I SAW AFP ARTICLE JUNE 14, DATELINE, WASHINGTON, TO EFFECT USSR COULD HAVE REACHED AN ACCORD WITH MAURITIUS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF SMALL SOVIET NAVAL BASE ON THIS ISLAND. AFP BASED ITS INFORMATION ON "AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES" WHICH REPORTEDLY STATED USSR MAY HAVE OBTAINED NAVAL FACILITIES IN EXCHANGE FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE. STORY WENT ON TO SAY THAT SOVIETS HAD, SEVERAL TIMES, ATTEMPTED IN VAIN TO OBTAIN BASE RIGHTS IN INDIA. INDIA, HOWEVER, WAS EQUALLY OPPOSED TO AMERICAN AS WELL AS SOVIET INFLUENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN AND FOR THIS REASON NEW DELHI HAS BEEN OPPOSED TO

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EXPANDED INSTALLATION PROPOSED FOR DIEGO GARCIA.

2. THIS AFP DISPATCH WAS FEATURED PROMINENTLY OVER WEEKEND IN PRESS HERE: ANTI-GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER, MAURICIEN, EDITORIALY CALLED FOR FORMAL DENIAL BY GOVERNMENT CONCERNING SUCH ACCUSATIONS, ADDING: "THESE REPEATED ALLUSIONS TO A SELLOUT OF MAURITIUS TO THE RUSSIANS SHOULD NOT BE LONG TOLERATED."

3. TODAY, ADVANCE, PM'S OWN PAPER, PRINTED VERBATIM DENIAL OF BASE PLANS JUNE 15 BY SOV AMB BANDOURA WHO BRANDED STORY AS CALUMNIOUS INVENTION AND DESIGNED TO CAMOUFLAGE (US) PLANS TO CREATE AN ATOMIC BASE AT DIEGO GARCIA. BANDOURA SAID SUCH PLANS RAISE ENERGETIC PROTESTATIONS IN NUMEROUS COUNTRIES, PROTESTATIONS WHICH WILL GROW.

4. AT QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY RECEPTION, FORMER UDM LEADER, MAURICE LESAGE (OPPOSITION), TOLD ME HE INTENDED TO RAISE QUESTION IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY THIS WEEK, PRESSING FOR GOVERNMENT EXPLANATION ON THIS SUPPOSED AGREEMENT.

5. I DO NOT LIKE TO BE SANDBAGGED, NOR DO I LIKE TO SEE SOV AMB GIVEN EXCUSE TO PLAY THE MARTYR AND KNIFE US ON DIGEO. I DON'T WANT TO JUMP TO ANY UNWARRANTED CONCLUSIONS AS TO SOURCE AND MOTIVATION OF AFP STORY, BUT I DO WANT TO MAKE CLEAR TO ALL CONCERNED THAT IF THERE IS NO REAL AND PROVABLE BASIS FOR THIS STORY, WE ARE LIKELY TO BE PUT ON POSITION, AT MINIMUM, OF SEEMING TO BE CRYING WOLF AND, AT WORST, TO (A) GENERATE SYMPATHY FOR SOVIETS HERE AS MALIGNED VICTIMS OF SOME SORT OF BUMBLING PSY WAR ON OUR PART, AND (B) AROUSE EMBARRASSMENT OR RESENTMENT IN GOM, POSSIBLY INCLUDING PM HIMSELF. IF PM COMES BACK FROM OAU MEETING JUNE 21 WITH CHIP ON HIS SHOULDER, RESULT COULD MAKE HIM, TEMPORARILY AT LEAST, LESS INCLINED THAN HERETOFORE TO ACCEPT US NAVAL VISITS. (WE HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED GREEN LIGHT FROM DEPARTMENT FOR PLANNED COMIDEASTFOR TURNOVER HERE END JULY OR FOR AUGUST VISIT GUIDED MISSILE CRUISER CHICAGO. NATURALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE GOM PRE-DISPOSED TO WELCOME THESE VISITS RATHER THAN OTHER WAY AROUND.)

6. WOULD DEPARTMENT PLEASE SHED SOME LIGHT AND GUIDANCE ASAP.
MANHARD

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Message Attributes

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